



Capitol Outlook

Hansen Clarke

State Senator • 1st District • Toll-free 877.252.7537

■ Senator Clarke Urges You to Utilize the New 2-1-1 Service

Sometimes you just don't know where to turn for answers. It happens to all of us. But thanks to the United Way for Southeastern Michigan, there is a safe, free, and easy way to get the information you need.

Last December, the United Way launched its southeastern Michigan 2-1-1 call center. 2-1-1 is an easy-access, multi-lingual, comprehensive information and referral service

that connects people to health and human services, as well as volunteer opportunities, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. 2-1-1 can also disseminate public health and preparedness information in times of crisis.

2-1-1 specialists are trained to handle each call with dignity, making the process of asking for help less painful and the connection to services much easier and effective. Here are just some of the issues that 2-1-1 specialists can assist with:

- Child, youth, and family services
- Access to food, shelter, and clothing



- Physical and mental health care services
- Employment and job training assistance
- Help for seniors, the disabled, non-English speakers, and others

Currently, more than half of Michigan's population is able to access needed services by dialing 2-1-1. The United Way is working to expand coverage statewide. Simply dial 2-1-1 for assistance today.

For more information, please contact the United Way for Southeastern Michigan toll-free at 1-800-552-1183, or visit their website at www.uwsem.org.





State Senator **Hansen Clarke**

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Senator Hansen Clarke Working for You!

Taking Control of Home Energy Costs **Help Make Home Heating Costs Manageable**

Homeowners from all over Michigan are struggling to deal with escalating costs associated with home heating. One way to help may be to get on a budget plan



that eliminates the seasonal spike in energy costs.

DTE Energy offers a program called *Budgetwise Billing* that calculates the average monthly bill based on your previous year's usage. You pay a fixed amount each month for the first 11 months. The final month's billing reflects any difference between the estimate and the actual amount of energy used in your household.

Anyone is eligible to enroll in this plan as long as they are up-to-date on their payments and do not have an existing payment agreement. If you would like to learn more about *Budgetwise Billing*,

please call DTE Energy at 800-477-4747 or visit their website at DTEenergy.com.

If a budget plan isn't right for you, consider signing up for a payment assistance program. DTE Energy has specialists available to help low-income customers reduce their unpaid balances by providing a personal payment plan, agency referrals, and follow-up. Families with the following qualify for payment assistance:

- An unpaid balance greater than \$750
- No illegal usage
- Household incomes at or below program guidelines